

Dear Clatsop County Commissioners,

I am writing today asking for reasonable solutions regarding Short Term Rentals in Clatsop County and to vote **AGAINST** the Planning Commissioners recommendation.

The first town hall meeting that county staff put on in 2020 was to help educate members of the community on the ordinance in an effort to alleviate the significant complaint burden. The vast majority of these complaints were not about safety, often they were not even violations according to the ordinance, but they were primarily complaints of personal preference.

STR permit holders took the feedback sincerely and many made voluntary adjustments pertaining to maximum occupancy, minimum stay, and trash collection. Unfortunately, collaboration did not fit the agenda here for those that oppose STRs.

It soon became clear that these specific complaints would evolve to take advantage of whatever topic would best advance an anti-STR agenda. At one point it was water consumption until refuted, then it progressed to COVID safety, and now it is all about zoning. It's helpful to focus on how we got here with so many bait-and-switch tactics being employed.

The complaint data has overwhelmingly shown that this problem has been blown out of proportion. There are very few complaints, they are almost all from the same people, and an incredibly small amount of these were violation worthy. If we go back to the beginning, the data we have on complaints clearly demonstrates then and now that the suggested concerns about STR proliferation, abuse, and corporate profiteering are unsubstantiated. I'm still trying to untangle how long term rentals (anything over 30 days) are not also considered 'commercial activity' by the definitions consistently used against STRs.

Moving beyond the data we have, there are many scenarios where these regular complainers have been caught submitting verifiable false statements and at times fabricated evidence. I spent an entire Saturday disproving a dishonest and nasty complaint. My neighbor took a photo of a car on the road and submitted it to the county as evidence of a safety hazard blocking the road. It's not surprising that the county officials fully accepted my explanation, disproving this malicious claim, but only after my entire day was claimed by pouring over camera footage, assembling, and submitting all the evidence. In this situation, my video footage shows that the car in question backed up into the road and pulled back in the driveway in under 1 minute! During this time, a neighbor took a photo and submitted this fabricated complaint alongside a malicious statement. This is not an isolated occurrence as there are countless complaints that are verifiably false, but this one is particularly upsetting due to how blatant and unmistakable the dishonesty is. Situations like these put the true colors of this agenda on display for the public, should they choose to see it. It should also motivate caution pertaining to any ordinance changes that can easily be weaponized. It's cheap and easy to submit complaints.

Unfortunately, this kind of bullying behavior has become common. You can even see it bleed into statements that have on multiple occasions named commissioners and county staff

unresponsive, unethical, and irresponsible when faced with proposals that do not meet their personal expectations.

Let's also remember that 83% of homes in Cove Beach are used part time. It's simply not a typical residential neighborhood and short term stays have been standard long before the most vocal critics moved into the neighborhood. Not only that but the numbers cited are consistently exaggerated. It is not true that 30% of the homes in Cove Beach are used as STRs. Even before you remove outstanding permits that have been dormant for years, 30% is not even close. If we really want to understand the scope of these issues in more detail, let's stop and gather meaningful data. For example, my home averages low water consumption (and therefore low sewage discharge), is only rented a portion of the year, and the average guest count is around 5 people despite a maximum of 8 allowed. This is for a relatively large house that has been the target of many false complaints. It would be easy to ask for this kind of data so we can understand the facts and work together towards win/win solutions.

Severe STR restrictions will have many downstream, unintended consequences. Most homes that now offer short term stays will likely turn into second homes that only friends and family of the owners can access. This may push out young families from ownership but ocean front real estate will not miraculously become housing that is accessible to lower income workers. Supply of STR homes along the coast will continue to dwindle, driving up prices, and limiting access to the coast for many Oregonians and out of state visitors. Many jobs that directly and indirectly service STRs and tourists will be negatively impacted. Oregon Coast tourism will be substituted for other destinations by many and tax revenue will decline.

A vote to significantly restrict or eliminate STRs is a vote to cancel the income that many people rely on to favor the few that instead of adapting to a changing world, fight to make the world, and their neighbors, adapt to them.

Some want to pursue a path of exclusion and prohibit STRs. I urge you to vote on a path that is inclusive because there are endless solutions to our ever evolving needs and concerns if we work together in good faith.

Thank you.

Jonathan Felix-Lund